THE COUNTRY WIFE.

THE

COUNTRY WIFE,

AN

ENTERTAINMENT,

IN TWO ACTS,

ALTERED FROM WYCHERLEY;

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXXVI.

(Price One Shilling.)

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, 1786.

(COVENT-GARDEN.)

SPARKISH,	Mr. *Palmer.*
PINCHWIFE,	Mr. *Hull.*
HARCOURT,	Mr. *Davies.*
DORILANT,	Mr. *Cubitt.*
Servant to Harcourt.	
ALITHEA,	Mrs. *Bates.*
MARGERY PINCHWIFE,	Mrs. *Brown.*

SCENE, *LONDON.*

The Country Wife.

ACT I. Scene, Harcourt's *Lodgings.*

Harcourt *and* Dorilant *are diſcovered.*

Harc. WELL, a plague of all love and wenching, ſay I! Women ſerve but to keep a man from better company: Wine, wine and good fellowſhip are laſting, rational, and manly pleaſures.

Dor. For all that, give me ſome of thoſe pleaſures you call effeminate too;—they help to reliſh one another.

Harc. They diſturb one another.

Dor. No, Frank—miſtreſſes are like books; if you pore upon them too much, they doze you, and make you unfit for company; but if uſed diſcreetly, you are the fitter for converſation by them.

Harc. Right—ſo far I agree—a miſtreſs ſhould be like a little ſnug country retreat near town; not to dwell at conſtantly—but only for a night, and away—to taſte the town the better when a man returns.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Sparkiſh is below, Sir.

Harc. What, my dear friend!—A rogue that is fond of me only for abuſing him, I think.

Dor. Oh, that's becauſe he don't ſee it; for Sparkiſh can no more think the men laugh at him, than that the women jilt him; his opinion of himſelf is ſo good,

Harc. Did you ſay I was at home?

Serv. No, Sir.

Harc. Then tell him I'm gone out—to meet him, you believe; for I left word I ſhould be at the Cocoa-tree at nine o'clock.

Serv. Yes, Sir. [*Exit.*

Harc. There's no being free from him long;—he's one of thoſe nauſeous offerers at wit, who, like the worſt fiddlers, will thruſt themſelves into all people's houſes.

Dor. And whoſe company would be as troubleſome to us as a cuckold's, when you want his wife's.

Harc. Who knows but that may be the caſe ſoon, Ned!—for he's going to be married.

Dor. Sparkiſh!—to whom?

Harc. To a lady of wit, beauty, and fortune.—One that I hope to be better acquainted with ſoon.

Dor. For heaven's ſake, Frank, reſcue her; be charitable; ſet her up in the lottery of love, and let you and I draw for the prize!

Harc. No, Ned, you are too fortunate for me to cope with that way:——

Enter Pinchwife.

Who have we here?—Pinchwife?

Pinch. Gentlemen, your ſervant.

Dor. Sir, your humble ſervant.

Harc. Well, Jack, by thy long abſence from town, the grumneſs of thy countenance, and the ſlovenlineſs of thy habit, I ſhould give thee joy—ſhould I not—of marriage?

Pinch. 'Sdeath!—does he know it, or is it only gueſs! [*Aſide.*] Oh! as to dreſs, Frank,—my long ſtay in the country will excuſe my dreſs;—then I have a ſuit of law that brings me up to town,

town, that puts me out of humour;—and beſides, I muſt give Sparkiſh, to-morrow, five thouſand pounds to marry my ſiſter.

Dor. So, now the ſecret's out, who it is. [*Aſide.*

Harc. What, his ſiſter! my old flame! [*Aſide.* Nay, you country gentlemen, rather than not purchaſe, will buy any thing; for he is but a cracked title, if we may be allowed to quibble: Well, but am I to give thee joy?—for I heard *thou* wert married.

Pinch. What then?

Harc. Why then, the next thing that is to be heard is—thou art a cuckold.

Pinch. Why ſo, Sir?—I have married no London wife—I took care of that.

Harc. Pſhaw! that's all one; your grave circumſpection, in marrying one of your ruſtic innocents, is like refuſing a deceitful pampered Smithfield jade, to go down and be cheated by a friend in the country.

Pinch. A pox on him and his ſimile too; however, I'll anſwer him accordingly. [*Aſide.*] She has no beauty but her youth, no attraction but her modeſty; wholeſome, homely, and houſewifely; that's all.

Dor. He talks as like a graſier as he looks. [*Aſide.*

Harc. But let us ſee her, and judge for ourſelves. Is ſhe in town?

Pinch. No, no—ſhe's too aukward, ill-favoured and ſilly for that.

Dor. Then methinks you ſhould bring her, Sir, to be taught breeding.

Pinch. To be taught! No, Sir—I thank you—good wives and private ſoldiers ſhould always be kept ignorant.

Harc. But prithee why didſt marry her—if ſhe be ſo ugly, ill-bred, and ſilly?——Is not keeping better than marriage?

Pinch. I don't know but it might, if one could keep a wench to one's ſelf.

Harc. So then, you've only married to keep a wench to yourſelf!—Ha! ha! ha!

Dor. Which I don't doubt but your friend will be very ſucceſsful in.

Pinch. Sir!

Dor. I ſay, Sir, that you gave very good tokens of your precaution laſt night; for you was extremely careful of the lady you accompanied to the play.

Pinch. The devil!—how miſchances ſwarm in this curſed town!—I wiſh the playhouſe had been in flames! [*Aſide.*

Dor. No Italian huſband could have played the guardian more faithfully.——Perhaps you don't remember me, Sir!

Pinch. 'Twill be blown, I ſee, that ſhe's in town, to the whole corporation of cuckold-makers. [*Aſide.*

Harc. The play! why, what do'ſt bluſh, man, (at nine-and-forty) to be ſeen with a wench at the play?

Dor. No, Frank; if your friend bluſhes, 'tis at being ſeen there with his *wife*; for men are, now-a-days, more aſhamed of *them*, than of a wench!

Pinch. Hell and confuſion!—I'm in a fine ſituation, ſince they know 'twas ſhe. [*Aſide.*

Harc. But, prithee, own it, Jack!—Was it thy wife or not?

Dor. She was exceſſive pretty!—I thought ſo, even at a diſtance.

Pinch. May be ſo, Sir; for which reaſon you are never like to come near her again!—So, your ſervant, both!—

Harc.

Harc. Nay, pray ſtay a little.—

Pinch. I can't now.———

Harc. Come, you ſhall dine with us.

Pinch. I have dined already.

Harc. What! at nine o'clock in the morning!

Pinch. Oh! breakfaſted, I mean.—

Harc. Ay, ay; but thou ſhalt dine with us; I'll treat thee.—Come, dear rogue! thou ſhalt ſpend none of thy Hampſhire money to-day.

Pinch. Treat me!—He uſes me already like a cuckold. [*Aſide.*

Harc. Nay, you ſhan't go, poſitively.

Pinch. But poſitively I *muſt* go, and will; for I have buſineſs at home. [*Exit.*

Dor. To beat his wife, I ſuppoſe; ha! ha! ha! He is jealous of her.

Harc. Pray tell me, Dorilant; you have ſeen this little moppet of his:—Is ſhe really pretty?

Dor. Oh! beyond deſcription, Frank; lovely as the morning; and, like that, the more ſo for her bluſhes!—So ſweet! ſo innocent! ſo ſoft!—and ſo complying!——

Harc. There you've hit it, Ned!—that's her greateſt merit with you, we know.

Dor. I muſt ſee her once more, now I know who ſhe is, or periſh with deſpair.

Harc. Well, well—come, don't be frightened!—take heart! thou ſhalt ſee her once again, if it be only to plague that ſurly tyrant her huſband.—

Dor. But how? how? When, my dear Harcourt?

Harc. Why, ſoon, ſoon, my dear Dorilant. Sparkiſh is to be married, you hear, to her ſiſter-in-law to-morrow. Now, the devil muſt be in Pinchwife if he keeps her from the wedding;—ſo, do you find out Sparkiſh, and get an invitation

from him.——It's no favour, I aſſure you; for he's ſuch a coxcomb, he'd make a ſhew of his bride to the whole town, if ſhe'd let him.——I am now going to the Cocoa-Tree; do you, I ſay, throw yourſelf in our way, when we return, and, I warrant you, the bait takes!

Dor. I'll do't!—'ſdeath! I ſhall never drive her from my thoughts!—her dreſs—ſo ſuited to her form!—her manner, ſo unaffected!——

Harc. Had you any diſcourſe with her?

Dor. Oh, yes, for a few minutes; while her baſhaw was gone out for a coach.

Harc. Where did ſhe ſit?

Dor. In the gallery, three rows behind me;——but preſently the churl came back again, and, with a grunt, whipt her under his arm, and carried her off in triumph.

Harc. Well, who knows but we may triumph in our turn?—I'll expect you.

Dor. With more ſwiftneſs than time; he may halt, but Cupid's wings outfly imagination! Adieu!

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE Pinchwife's *Lodgings.*

Enter Alithea *and* Margery Pinchwife.

Marg. Pray, ſiſter, where are the beſt fields and woods to walk in, in London?

Alit. A pretty queſtion! [*Aſide.*] Why, ſiſter, there's Iſlington and Chelſea fields, and St. James's park;—and then, for cloſe walks, there's White-Conduit-Houſe and Ranelagh.

Marg. I wonder what makes my huſband look ſo grum here in town, and keep me up ſo cloſe, that he won't let me go a-walking, nor wear my beſt gown!

Alit.

Alit. O, he's jealous, ſiſter.

Marg. Jealous! What's that?

Alit. Why, he's afraid you ſhould love another man.

Marg. How ſhould he be afraid of that, when he won't let me ſee another man?

Alit. Did'n't he carry you yeſterday to a play?

Marg. Ay; but then we ſat among all the ugly people. He would not let me come near the gentry, who ſat under us; ſo that I could not ſee them. He told me none but naughty women ſat there, whom they touſed and mouſed.—But I would have ventured, for all that.

Alit. And how did you like the play?

Marg. Why, as to that matter, I was a-weary of the play; but then I liked hugeouſly the actors; they are the goodlieſt, propereſt men, ſiſter, that ever——

Alit. O, but you muſt not like the actors.

Marg. No! Why, how could I help it, when they were all dreſt, and glittered like any thing?

Enter Pinchwife.

O my dear, dear Bud, welcome home: Why doſt look ſo froppiſh? who has nanger'd thee?

Pinch. Nanger'd thee, ah, piſh! You're a fool.

Marg. How can you go for to call one ſo?

[*Goes aſide and cries.*

Alit. Faith, ſo ſhe is, for crying for no fault, poor tender creature!

Pinch. What, you'd have her as forward as yourſelf, I warrant!—Were you not talking of plays and players when I came in? You are her encourager in ſuch diſcourſes.

Marg. No, indeed, dear, ſhe chid me juſt now for liking the player-men.

Pinch.

Pinch. Nay, if ſhe's ſo innocent as to own to me her liking of 'em, there's no great hurt in it. [*Aſide.*] Well, well, come, my poor rogue, thou likeſt none better than me, I'm ſure!

Marg. Yes, indeed, but I do; the player-men are finer folks.

Pinch. But you love none better than me!

Marg. Oh, you—you, you know, are my own dear bud, and I know you: I hate a ſtranger.

Pinch. That's right:—you muſt love me only; and not be like the naughty town-women, who only hate their huſbands, and love every man elſe.

Marg. Do they?

Pinch. Yes; love plays, viſits, fine coaches, fine clothes, fiddles, balls, treats; and ſo lead a wicked town life.

Marg. Nay, if to enjoy all theſe things be a town-life, London is not ſo bad a place, neither!

Pinch. How? [*Muſes.*]

Alit. The fool has forbid me diſcovering to her the pleaſures of the town, and is now ſetting her agog himſelf. [*Aſide.*

Marg. But, huſband, do the town-women love the player-men too?

Pinch. Yes, I warrant you.

Marg. Ay, I warrant you,

Pinch. Why, you don't, I hope?

Marg. No, bud, no not I;—but why have we no player-men in the country?

Pinch. How?—hark you, Mrs. Minx, aſk me no more to go to a play.

Marg. Nay, why ſo, Love? I did not care for going before, but when you forbid me, it makes me, as 'twere, deſire it.

Alit. So 'twill be in other matters, I warrant. [*Aſide.*

Marg.

Marg. Pray let me go to a play, dear?

Pinch. Hold your peace,—I won't.

Marg. But I will go.

Pinch. Then I tell you, once for all, that one of the wildeſt fellows about town, who ſaw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Marg. Indeed! who was it?—pray now, who was it?

Pinch. 'Sdeath! I've gone too far, and ſlipt before I was aware;—how overjoy'd ſhe is! [*Aſide.*

Marg. Was it the gentleman in blue and ſilver, who took ſuch care of me while you went for the coach?—or was it ſome of our Hampſhire neighbours?—I promiſe you, I am vaſtly beholden to him.

Pinch. I promiſe you, you lie; for he would but ruin you, as he has done hundreds.

Marg. Ay, but if he loves me, why ſhould he ruin me? anſwer me that: methinks he ſhould not,—I would not do him any harm.

Alit. Ha, ha—a choice couple they are indeed! [*Aſide.*

Pinch. 'Tis very well, but I'll keep him from doing you any harm or me either.—Next week I ſhall be rid of them all, rid of this town, and my dreadful apprehenſions. [*Aſide.*] Come, be not melancholy, for thou ſhalt go into the country very ſoon, deareſt.

Alit. Great comfort!

Marg. Piſh! what d'ye tell me of the country for?

Pinch. How's this! what, piſh at the country?

Marg. Let me alone, I am not well,—but pray, Bud, let's go to a play to-night!

Pinch. No, no;—no more plays.—But why are you ſo eager to ſee a play?

Marg.

Marg. Faith, dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the playermen; and would ſee, if I could, the gallant you ſay loves me: that's all, dear Bud.

Pinch. Is that all, dear Bud?

Marg. Come, pray, Bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain—if its only into the park.

Pinch. So! the obſtinacy already of the town-wife; and I muſt, whilſt ſhe's here, humour her like one. [*Aſide.*] How ſhall we do, that ſhe may not be ſeen or known?

Alit. Muffle her up with a bonnet and a handkerchief, and I'll go with her to avoid ſuſpicion.

Pinch. And run into more danger!—No, no, I am obliged to you for your kindneſs; a bonnet and handkerchief is no diſguiſe, it will only awaken curioſity.

Alit. What will you do then?—The taylor brought home laſt night the clothes you intend for a preſent to your godſon in the country.

Marg. You muſt not tell that, Alithea.

Alit. But I will,—When you were with your lawyers laſt night, this lady, to divert me and herſelf, put 'em on, and they fitted her to a hair.

Pinch. Thank you, thank you, Alithea, 'tis the luckieſt thought! go this moment, Margery, into your chamber, and put 'em on again—and you ſhall walk with me into the park, as my godſon—Well thought of, Alithea!—I ſhall love you for ever for this.

Marg. And ſo ſhall I too, I'll put 'em on directly. [*Going, returns.*] Suppoſe, Bud, I muſt keep on my petticoats, for fear of ſhewing my legs?

Pinch. No, no, you fool, never mind your legs,

Marg.

Marg. No more I will then, Bud—This is pure!
[*Exit rejoiced.*

Pinch. What a ſimpleton it is! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *the Park.*

Enter Sparkiſh, Dorilant, *and* Harcourt.

Spark. Come, you bubbling rogues, you, where do we ſup?—O Harcourt, my miſtreſs tells me you have made love, fierce love, to her often; ha, ha, ha! but I—

Harc. I make love to her!——

Spark. Nay, I forgive thee, and I know her; but I am ſure I know myſelf.

Dor. Do you, Sir? Then you are the wiſeſt man in the world, and I honour you as ſuch. [*Bowing.*

Spark. O your ſervant, Sir, you are at your raillery, are you? You can't oblige me more—I'm your man—He'll meet with his match—Ha! Harcourt!—Did not you hear me laugh prodigiouſly, at the play laſt night?

Harc. Yes, and was very much diſturbed at it.—You put the actors and audience into confuſion—and all your friends out of countenance.

Spark. So much the better—I love confuſion—and to ſee folks out of countenance—I was in tip-top ſpirits, faith, and ſaid a thouſand good things.

Dor. But I thought you had gone to plays to laugh at the poet's good things, and not at your own!

Spark. Your ſervant, Sir; No, I thank you. 'Gad I go to a play, as to a country treat: I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to t'other, or elſe I'm ſure I ſhould not be merry at either: and the reaſon why we are ſo often louder than the players, is, becauſe we hate authors damnably.

Dor.

Dor. But why ſhould you hate the poor rogues? you have too much wit, and deſpiſe writing, I'm ſure.

Spark. O yes, I deſpiſe writing. But women, women, that make men do all fooliſh things, make 'em write ſongs too. Every body does it: 'tis e'en as common with lovers, as playing with fans; and you can no more help rhyming to your Phillis, than drinking to your Phillis.

Harc. But the poets damn'd your ſongs, did they?

Spark. O yes, damn the poets: they turn'd them into burleſque, as they call it: that burleſque is a hocus pocus trick they have got; which, by the virtue of hictius doctius, topſy turvey, they make a clever witty thing abſolute nonſenſe: Do you know, Harcourt, that they ridiculed my laſt ſong, twang twang, the beſt I ever wrote?

Harc. That may be, and be very eaſily ridiculed for all that.

Dor. Favour me with it, Sir, I never heard it.

Spark. What, and have all the park about us?

Harc. Which you'll not diſlike, and ſo prithee, begin.

Spark. I never am aſk'd twice, and ſo have at you.

SONG.

I.

Tell not me of the roſes and lilies,
Which tinge the fair cheek of your Phillis!
Tell not me of the dimples and eyes,
For which ſilly Corydon dies!
Let all whining lovers go hang!
My heart would you hit,
Tip your arrow with wit,
And it comes to my heart with a twang, twang,
And it comes to my heart with a twang.

I am

II.

I am rock to the handſome and pretty,
Can only be touch'd by the witty;
And beauty will ogle in vain;
The way to my heart's thro' my brain.
Let all whining lovers go hang;
We wits, you muſt know,
Have two ſtrings to our bow,
To return them their darts with a twang, twang;
And return them their darts with a twang.

At the end of the ſong Harcourt *and* Dorilant *ſteal away from* Sparkiſh, *and leave him ſinging.—— He ſinks his voice by degrees, at the ſurpriſe of their being gone; then they re-enter.*

Spark. What the deuce did you go away for?

Harc. Your miſtreſs is coming.

Spark. The devil ſhe is—O hide, hide me from her. [*Hides behind* Harcourt.

Harc. She ſees you.

Spark. But I will not ſee her; for I'm engag'd, and at this inſtant. [*Looking at his watch.*

Harc. Pray firſt take me, and reconcile me to her.

Spark. Another time: faith, it is to a lady; and one cannot make excuſes to a woman.

Dor. You have need of 'em, I believe.

Spark. Pſhaw, prithee hide me.

Margery, Pinchwife, *and* Alithea *appear.*

Harc. Your ſervant, Mr. Pinchwife.

Pinch. Come along——

Marg. Lau!—what a ſweet delightful place this is!

Pinch. Come along, I ſay——don't ſtare about you ſo——you'll betray yourſelf——

[*Exit* Pinchwife, *pulling* Margery.

Harc.

Harc. He does not know us.——

Dor. Or he won't know us——

Spark. So much the better——

[*Exit* Dorilant *after them at a diſtance.*

Harc. Who is that pretty youth with him, Sparkiſh?

Spark. Some relation of Margery's, I ſuppoſe, for he is ſomething like her in face and gawkyneſs.

Dorilant *returns.*

Dor. By all my hopes, uncle—Margery in boy's clothes!—I am all over agitation. [*Aſide to* Harc.

Harc. Be quiet, or you'll ſpoil all. They return.——Alithea has ſeen you, Sparkiſh, and will be angry if you don't go to her: beſides, I would fain be reconciled to her, which none but you can do, my dear friend.

Spark. Well, that's a better reaſon, dear friend: I would not go near her now for her's or my own ſake; but I can deny you nothing; for tho' I have known thee a great while, never go, if I do not love thee as well as a new acquaintance.

Harc. I am obliged to you, indeed, my dear friend: I would be well with her, only to be well with thee ſtill; for theſe ties to wives uſually diſſolve all ties to friends.

Spark. But they ſhan't though——Come along.

[Sparkiſh *and* Harcourt *retire with* Alithea.

Re-enter Pinchwife *and* Margery.

Pinch. Siſter, if you will not go, we muſt leave you—[*To* Alithea.]—Come, let's be gone, Margery.

Marg. Don't you believe that; I han't half my belly-full of ſights yet.

Pinch.

Pinch. Then walk this way.

Marg. Lord! what a power of fine folks are here.

Pinch. Come along; what are you a muttering at?

Marg. There's the young gentleman, there, you were ſo angry about—— that's in love with me!

Pinch. No, no, he's a dangler after your ſiſter—or pretends to be—but they are all bad alike—Come along, I ſay. [*He pulls her away.*

Marg. I am glad to hear that—perhaps I may fit you, though.

[*Exit with* Pinchwife, Dorilant *follows them.*

Sparkiſh, Harcourt, *and* Alithea *come forward.*

Spark. Come, dear Madam, for my ſake you ſhall be reconciled to him.

Alit. For your ſake I hate him.

Harc. That's ſomething too cruel, Madam, to hate me for his ſake!

Spark. Ay, indeed, Madam, too, too cruel to me, to hate my friend for my ſake.

Alit. I hate him, becauſe he is your enemy; and you ought to hate him too, for making love to me, if you love me.

Spark. That's a good one! I hate a man for loving you! If he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help; and 'tis your fault, not his, if he admires you.

Alit. Is it for your honour, or mine, to ſuffer a man to make love to me, who am to marry you to-morrow?

Harc. But why, deareſt Madam, will you be more concerned for his honour than he is himſelf? Let his honour alone for my ſake and his. He has no honour,—

Spark. How's that?

Harc. But what my dear friend can guard himſelf.

Spark. O ho!—— that's right again.

Alit. You aſtoniſh me, Sir, with want of jealouſy.

Spark. And you make me giddy, Madam, with your jealouſy and fears, and virtue and honour: 'gad, I ſee virtue makes a woman as troubleſome as a little reading or learning.

Harc. Come, Madam, you ſee you ſtrive in vain to make him jealous of me: my dear friend is the kindeſt creature in the world to me.

Spark. Poor fellow!

Harc. But his kindneſs only is not enough for me, without your favour, your good opinion, dear Madam; 'tis that muſt perfect my happineſs. He believes all I ſay: would you would do ſo. Jealous of me! I would not wrong him nor you for the world.

Spark. Look you there: hear him, hear him, and not walk away ſo.—Come back again.

[Alithea *walks careleſsly to and fro.*

Harc. I love you, Madam, ſo——

Spark. How's that! nay—now you begin to go too far indeed.

Harc. So much, I confeſs, I ſay, I love you, that I would not have you miſerable, and caſt yourſelf away upon ſo unworthy and inconſiderable a thing as what you ſee here.

[*Clapping his hand on his breaſt, points to* Sparkiſh.

Spark. No, faith, I believe thou would'ſt not; now his meaning is plain; but I knew before thou would'ſt not wrong me, nor her.

Harc. No, no: Heavens forbid the glory of her ſex ſhould fall ſo low as into the embraces of ſuch a con-

a contemptible wretch, the leaſt of mankind—my dear friend here—I injure him!

Alit. Very well. [*Embracing* Sparkiſh.

Spark. No, no, dear friend; I knew it: Madam, you ſee he will rather wrong himſelf than me, in giving himſelf ſuch names.

Alit. Do not you underſtand him yet?

Spark. Come, come, you ſhall ſtay till he has ſaluted you; that I may be aſſured you are friends, after his honeſt advice and declaration: Come, pray Madam be friends with him.

Enter Pinchwife *and* Margery, Dorilant *at a diſtance.*

Alit. You muſt pardon me, Sir, that I am not yet ſo obedient to you.

Pinch. What, invite your wife to kiſs men?—monſtrous! Are you not aſhamed? I will never forgive you. Let's be gone, ſiſter.

Spark. Are you not aſhamed, that I ſhould have more confidence in the chaſtity of your family, than you have?—You muſt not teach me,—I am a man of honour, Sir, though I am frank and free.

Pinch. Very frank, Sir, to ſhare your wife with your friends.—You ſeem to be angry, and yet won't go. [*To* Alithea.

Alit. No impertinence ſhall drive me away.

Pinch. Becauſe you like it.—But you ought to bluſh at expoſing your wife as you do. [*To* Spark.

Spark. I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love. Loving alone is as dull as eating alone; and ſo good night, for I muſt to Whitehall.—Madam, I hope you are now reconciled to my friend; and ſo I wiſh you a good-night, Madam; and ſleep if you can; for to-morrow, you know, I muſt viſit you early with a cano-

nical gentlemen. Good-night, dear Harcourt—remember to ſend your brother. [*Exit* Sparkiſh.

Harc. You may depend upon me. Madam, I hope you will not refuſe my viſit to-morrow, if it ſhould be earlier, with a canonical gentleman, than Mr. Sparkiſh?

Pinch. This gentlewoman is yet under my care, therefore you muſt yet forbear your freedom with her. [*Coming between* Alithea *and* Harcourt.

Harc. Muſt, Sir!

Pinch. Yes, Sir, ſhe is my ſiſter!

Harc. 'Tis well ſhe is, Sir——for I muſt be her ſervant, Sir.

Pinch. Come away, ſiſter, we had been gone if it had not been for you, and ſo avoided theſe rake-hells, who ſeem to haunt us.

Harc. I ſee a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unſociable, and only fit to converſe with his horſes, dogs, and his herds.

Pinch. I have buſineſs, Sir, and muſt mind it; your buſineſs is pleaſure, therefore you and I muſt go different ways.

Harc. Well, you may go on; but this pretty young gentleman [*takes hold of Margery*] ſhall ſtay with us, for I ſuppoſe his buſineſs is the ſame with ours—pleaſure.

Pinch. 'Sdeath, he knows her, ſhe carries it ſo ſillily! yet if he does not, I ſhould be more ſilly to diſcover it firſt. [*Aſide.*

Harc. Had you not rather ſtay with us? [*To Margery.*] Prithee, who is this pretty young fellow?

Pinch. One to whom I am a guardian—I wiſh I could keep her out of your hands! [*Aſide.*

Harc. Who is he? I never ſaw any thing ſo pretty in all my life.

Pinch.

Pinch. Pſhaw, do not look upon him ſo much, he's a poor baſhful youth, you'll put him out of countenance. [*Offers to take her away.*

Harc. Here, Dorilant—let me introduce this young gentleman to your acquaintance.—You are very like, and of the ſame age, and ſhould know one another.—Salute him, Dick, à la Francoiſe.

[Belville *kiſſes her.*

Pinch. I hate French faſhions.—Men kiſs one another! [*Endeavours to take hold of her.*

Marg. I am out of my wits—what do you kiſs me for? I am no woman!

Harc. But you are ten times handſomer.

Marg. Nay, now you jeer one; and pray don't jeer me.

Harc. Kiſs him again, Dick.

Pinch. No, no, no. Come away, come away.

[*To* Margery.

Harc. Why, what haſte are you in? Why won't you let me talk with him?

Pinch. Come, pray let him go, I cannot ſtay fooling any longer; I tell you my wife ſtays ſupper for us.

Harc. Does ſhe?—Come then, we'll all go ſup with her.

Pinch. No, no—now I think on't, having ſtaid ſo long for us, I warrant ſhe's gone to bed—I wiſh ſhe and I were well out of your hands. [*Aſide.* Come, I muſt riſe early to morrow; come——

Harc. Well then, if ſhe be gone to bed—I wiſh her and you a good night. But pray, young gentleman, preſent my humble ſervice to her.

Marg. Thank your heartily, Sir. [*Bowing.*

Pinch. 'Sdeath, ſhe will diſcover herſelf yet in ſpite of me! [*Aſide.*

Dor. And mine too, Sir.

Marg. That I will, indeed. [*Bowing.*

Harc. Pray, give her this kiſs for me. [*Kiſſes her.*

Pinch. O heavens, what do I ſuffer?

Dor. And this for me. [*Kiſſes Margery.*

Marg. Thank you, Sir. [*Courteſies.*

Pinch. O the idiot—now 'tis out—Ten thouſand cankers gnaw away their lips. Come, come, driveler.

[*Exeunt* Harcout *and* Dorilant.

So, they are gone, at laſt. Siſter, ſtay with Margery, till I find my ſervant—don't let her ſtir an inch—I'll be back directly. [*Exit* Pinch.

Harcourt *and* Dorilant *return.*

Harc. What, not gone yet?—ſhew the young gentleman Roſamond's pond, while I ſpeak another word to this lady.

Dor. Shall I have that pleaſure?

Marg. With all my heart and ſoul, Sir.

[*Exeunt* Dorilant *and* Margery.

Alit. I cannot conſent to it indeed.

Harc. Let 'em look upon the place where ſo many deſpairing lovers have been deſtroyed.—You muſt indulge them—and me too in a few words.

[Alithea *and* Harcourt *ſtruggle.*

Alit. My brother will go diſtracted!—though he deſerves to be vexed a little for his brutality.

Harc. My friend is a very modeſt young man, you may depend upon his prudence!

Alit. Modeſt, prudent, and your friend!—I can't believe it—and I muſt follow them. [*Going.*

Enter Pinchwife.

Pinch. Where! how!—what's become of—gone—whither?——

Alit. He's only gone with the young gentleman to ſee ſomething.

Pinch.

Pinch. Something! ſee ſomething, with a plague! —where are they?

Alit. In the next walk only, brother.

Pinc. Only, only, where, where? [*Exit.*

Harc. What's the matter with him? Why ſo much concerned? But, deareſt Madam——

Alit. Pray let me go, Sir; I have ſaid and ſuffered enough already.

Harc. Then you will not look upon, nor pity my ſufferings!

Alit. To look upon 'em, when I cannot help 'em, were cruelty, not pity; therefore I will never ſee you more.—I will get rid of your importunities, and give my hand to Sparkiſh to-morrow morning. [*Exeunt.*

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II.

Alithea *riſing from her Toilet.*

Alit. LET me aſk myſelf ſeriouſly, why do I make ſuch a ſacrifice to the will (or rather, avarice) of a brother?——he has made the match, and thinks me bound in juſtice to fulfil it! Yet let me not be raſh.—Who knows but Mr. Sparkiſh may have good qualities enough to engage it after marriage?—Ah! I fear that marrying to increaſe love, would be like gaming to become rich—only make us loſe the little ſtock we had before!

Enter Sparkiſh *and* Dorilant, *with* Harcourt *diſguiſed as a Parſon.*

Spark. Dorilant!—Come in, come in boy!—A happy day to you, Madam!—and to us all!

Alit. [*Looking firſt at* Dorilant, *then at* Harcourt] Who have we here, Sir?

Spark. This? [*meaning* Dorilant] a friend of mine, deareſt, who is to give you away,—and this, my chaplain.

Alit. Your chaplain?

Spark. Ay, little George Harcourt of Cambridge, Frank's brother.—Your didn't forbid him, though you did Frank!—poor fellow!—he deſired me, Madam, to remember his humble ſervice to you, and to tell you, that (in obedience to your commands) he has refrained coming into your ſight!

Alit. Refrained coming! why is not that he?

Spark. Oh, fie!—nothing like him,—that is,—I mean, a little perhaps,—very little,—juſt in ſize, or ſo, but not in countenance;—he was recommended to me,—George was, by his brother, to be my chaplain; and that too, as a proof of his never having intended to interrupt our match!

Alit. Aſtoniſhing!

Spark. Why, Madam, I'll tell you the whole ſtory;—Frank Harcourt, when he was taking leave of me to-day, and preſenting his devoirs to you (which he did moſt reſpectfully, I aſſure you) aſked me, if I had provided a parſon?—I told him not abſolutely, (as at that time was really the caſe.) Whereupon, ſays he, I have a brother in town, who is in orders, and will be proud to be your chaplain.—I could do no leſs, you know, than receive the compliment;—ſo away goes he, in the moſt affable, good-natured manner in the world, and ſent him, as you ſee.

Alit. That is,—Frank goes home, puts on a demure look, a grizzle bob, and a black coat; then

comes

comes back, and tells you he is George,—and you believe him!

Spark. No, no,—hold you there, hold you there, my dear! I tell you, they were twins, George and he.—And, by the ſame token, the midwife put her garter about Frank's neck, to know 'em aſunder, they were ſo very like!

Alit. 'Tis time to end this farce, for I am tired of fooling!—Come, moſt reverend doctor, do, put an end to it at once.

Harc. With all my ſoul, divine, heavenly creature! whenever it ſhall pleaſe you.

Alit. He ſpeaks like a chaplain, prodigiouſly!

Spark. Ay, was not there *ſoul, divine and heavenly* in what he ſaid?

Alit. I tell you, Mr. impertinent black coat, that this dull trick of your's won't paſs; and, though you may delay our marriage——

Harc. Far be it from me, munificent patroneſs, to delay your marriage; I covet nothing more than to marry you this very inſtant, which I might do, if you yourſelf would;—for my noble, good-natured and thrice generous patron here, would not hinder it.

Spark. Who, I?—not, I, by the world,—you're ſure of me!

Alit. Well, Sir—if you are ſo blind, as not to ſee through this bare-faced impoſition, take the conſequence!——One thing I muſt apprize you of; which is, that, ſince you have wilfully led me into the ſnare, I now confeſs before ye all, that gentleman may marry one of us, but he ſhall never marry both. [*Exit.*

Harc. Charming creature! } *Aſide.*
Dor. Victoria, my boy, victoria! }

Spark.

Spark. Then, one thing I muſt apprize her of; —which is, that he ſhall marry one of us, and both of us too, or none of us;—ſo come along, my little domine doctor! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *a Chamber with a Table and Chair.*

Enter Pinchwife *and* Margery.

Pinch. Come, now we are alone, tell it me again, I ſay!

Marg. Lord, why I have told it you a hundred times, have not I?

Pinch. I would try, if, in a repetition of the tale, I could find her altering the leaſt circumſtance; for, if her ſtory be falſe, ſhe is ſo too [*Aſide.*]—Come, how was it?

Marg. Deary me! what pleaſure do you take to hear it!

Pinch. No, no; 'tis you that take a pleaſure in telling it;—ſo begin!

Marg. Why,—firſt of all,—as I ſaid, he—he kiſſed his hand to me, as I ſat on the bench, and made me a low bow——

Pinch. Well?

Marg. So then, I got up, and made him a courteſy.

Pinch. You did?

Marg. Yes, in good manners, Bud!—You know, one would not be uncivil!

Pinch. So?

Marg. About a minute or two afterwards, comes up to me one of thoſe gentlewomen, who have fruit and oranges in their hands, and begged of me to be ſo kind as to eat ſome!

Pinch. And did you?

Marg.

Marg. Yes, Bud! for ſhe was ſo civil, that ſhe would make me eat, whether I would or no; and then there were nice ſweetmeats mixed along with 'em!

Pinch. Well, and what followed?

Marg. Why ſhe looked earneſtly under my hat while I was eating (as hard as ever ſhe could look!) and cried out, *Oh bleſs your bright eyes*, ſays ſhe, *for they are worth a whole cluſter of diamonds!*

Pinch. Oh, rare!

Marg. And when ſhe ſaw me hide my face and bluſh, ſhe ſaid, *Don't turn away, ſweet creature!—You can't be ſo cruel as to kill him, I'm ſure!*

Pinch. To kill whom did ſhe mean?

Marg. I aſked her who, for I did not underſtand her at firſt:—*Why That gentleman*, ſays ſhe, pointing to Mr.——(I don't know his name, yet) *whom you have wounded ſo, that he is almoſt ready to die!—Lord!*—ſays I, *me wound? I would not have hurt him for the whole univarſal world.—So*, ſays ſhe, *I told him*; With that, ſhe beckoned the gentleman towards us;—and, would you believe it? by that time he came over the benches to me, he was perfectly cured, and as well as ever he was in all his life before!

Pinch. That engine of the devil! how ſhe moulded her!—But, tell me, who was by when this happened?

Marg. Oh, nobody, nobody, but ourſelves; for the people were all gone away;—ſo then, he ſat himſelf down by me, to take care of me!

Pinch. The careful ſcoundrel!—what, they both ſat down?

Marg. No, Bud, not both;—for he told her, that her ſiſter wanted to ſpeak with her, and ſo ſhe went away.

Pinch.

Pinch. She did?

Marg. Yes——

Pinch. Damn her for't.—And he was very civil, I warrant?

Marg. Oh, yes; as kind as any thing; for he took me cloſe round the waiſt, and kept looking at my necklace, and feeling it to know whether it was a garnet or no;—then he offered me a fine green ring, that he had, to keep; and tried it upon my middle finger, while he kiſſed my hand, over and over, a thouſand times!—I thought he would have eat it!

Pinch. And did you ſit ſtill all the time?

Marg. Yes, for I was afraid to ſtir.—You would not have had me *fit* with him, would you?

Pinch. The devil fight you both!—And—and—what elſe?—Come, you are a good girl, ſpeak out freely—what elſe, hey?

Marg. You,—ah,—you'll be angry, if I tell you all!

Pinch. No, I won't.

Marg. ——I am ſure you will!

Pinch. Indeed, I won't.——

Marg. Why, he—he—took—he took—

Pinch. Took what?—I'm in a cold ſweat!

Marg. He took—my——

Pinch. What, I ſay!—Out with it!—(What a lingering death I die!) [*Aſide.*

Marg. He took—my ſcarlet ribbon from my breaſt, which you gave me, and ſaid, he'd keep it for my ſake.

Pinch. Oh, is that all?

Marg. And ſo then you came back, Bud.

Pinch. Ay, and 'tis well I did, I find!—It is plain ſhe loves him, yet has not wit enough to conceal it!—But the ſight of him will increaſe her

her averſion to me, and love for him; and that very love inſtruct her how to deceive me. [*Aſide.* Go, fetch pen, ink and paper, out of the next room!

Marg. Yes, Bud. [*Exit.*

Pinch. [*Alone.*] Why ſhould women have more invention in love than men? It can only be becauſe they have more deſires, more ſoliciting paſſions, more hell, and more of the devil in 'em!

Re-enter Margery.

Come, Minx, ſit down and write.—I'll have you write a letter to your lover.

Marg. O Lud!—to the fine gentleman, a letter?

Pinch. Yes, *to the fine gentleman*, as you call him; ſo ſit down.—Come, begin—*Sir.* [*Dictates.*

Marg. Shan't I ſay, *dear Sir*!—you know one always ſays ſomething more than bare *Sir.*

Pinch. Write as I bid you, or I'll write ſtrumpet with this penknife in your face.

Marg. Nay, good Bud!— *Sir*,— [*Writes.*

Pinch. Though I ſuffered laſt night your nauſeous loathed kiſſes and embraces—write!

Marg. Why, why ſhould I ſay ſo?—I'm ſure he had a ſweet breath!

Pinch. Write—

Marg. Only let me put out *loathed.*——

Pinch. Write, I ſay;—or elſe—

Marg. Well then,—(If I muſt, I muſt) [*Writes.*

Pinch. Let's ſee, what have you writ?—[*Takes the paper and reads*]—*Tho' I ſuffered laſt night your kiſſes and embraces.*—Thou impudent creature! where is *nauſeous and loathed?*

Marg. I can't abide to write ſuch filthy words. [*Riſes.*

Pinch.

Pinch. You can't! ——Once more write as I'd have you, or I'll ſpoil thy writing for ever with this:—I'll ſtab out thoſe eyes, that are the cauſe of all my miſchief. [*Holds up the penknife.*

Marg. O lud! I will, I will, Bud!—I will— [*Sits down again.*

Pinch. ——Le.'s ſee now?—[*Reads.*] *Though I ſuffered laſt night your nauſeous loathed kiſſes and embraces,*—very well, go on—*yet I would not have you preſume that you ſhall ever repeat them.*—

Mar. I have writ it!

Pinch. For, what I then endured, was all from fear, not choice;———

Marg. So!

Pinch. But, now that I am out of your hands—

Marg. So!

Pinch. I think fit to acquaint you of this my reſolution;——

Marg. So!

Pinch. That you may, for evermore, ceaſe to purſue her, who hates and deteſts you.

Marg. So—h—h!

Pinch. What, do you ſigh?—*deteſts you—as much as ſhe loves her huſband and her honour.*

Marg. I vow, huſband, he'll never believe that I ſhould write ſuch a letter!

Pinch. What, he'd expect a kinder from you, hey?—Come, now, your name, your name only!

Marg. What, ſhan't I ſay, *your faithful humble ſervant till death?*—Nor nothing?

Pinch. [*Aſide*] Tormenting fiend!—No. Her ſtile, I find, would be very ſoft.—Come, now wrap it up, while I go fetch wax and a candle. [*Going, he turns about.*]——and, do you mind, write on the outſide,—*For Mr. Dorilant.* [*Exit.*

Marg.

Marg. Oh deary me!—I could leap out of my ſkin for joy!—I am glad he has told me his name;—dear Mr. Dorilant! but why ſhould I ſend thee ſuch a letter?—that will vex thee, and fret thee,—and make thee angry with me.—Well, I won't ſend it—ay, but then my huband will kill me—for I ſee plainly, he won't let me love Mr. Dorilant;—but what care I for my huſband.—I won't, ſo I won't, ſend poor Mr. Dorilant ſuch a letter!—but then, my huſband—oh!—but what if I writ at bottom, my huſband made me write it!—ay, but then my huſband would ſee it. Can one have no ſhift?—Ah! a London woman would have had a hundred preſently.—Stay—what if I ſhould write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon it too!—Ay, but then my huſband might chance to open and ſee it.—I don't know what to do—but yet, i-fegs, I'll try, ſo I will; for I won't ſend this letter to poor Mr. Dorilant, come what will!—Now, now, for't— [*Takes freſh paper.*

Dear-ſweet Mr. Dorilant,—ſo—

[She repeats as ſhe writes.

My huſband would have me ſend you a baſe, rude, unmannerly letter—but I won't—ſo—*and would have me forbid you loving me—but I won't*—ſo—*and would have me ſay to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Dorilant.—But I won't tell a lie for him*—there—*for I'm ſure, if you and I were in the country at cards together*—ſo—*I could not help treading on your toe under the table*—ſo—*And now he has taught me to write letters, you ſhall have longer ones from me, who am,*

Dear, dear, poor dear Mr. Dorilant,
your moſt humble friend, and
ſervant to command, till death,
Margery Pinchwife.

So

So—now wrap it up juſt like t'other—So—now, write, *For Mr. Dorilant.* Oh charming! But now, what ſhall I do with it, for here comes my huſband!

Enter Pinchwife.

Pinch. I have been detained by a prating coxcomb of a fellow, like Sparkiſh, who pretended a viſit to me; but I fear it was only to my wife.—[*Aſide.*]—Well, have you done?

Marg. Yes, Bud, juſt now.——

Pinch. Let's ſee it;—what do you tremble for?—What, you would not have it go?

Marg. Yes, I would, [*He opens and reads the firſt letter.*]—So, I had been finely ſerved, if I had given him this. [*Aſide.*

Pinch. Come, where is the wax and ſeal?

Marg. Lud, what ſhall I do now?—I have it—[*Aſide.*]——Pray let me ſee it.

Pinch. Give me the wax?

Marg. No, let me ſee it?——Lord, you think me ſo errant a fool, I can't ſeal a letter!—I will do it, ſo I will. [*Snatches the letter, changes it for the other, ſeals, and delivers it to him again.*]

Pinch. Nay, I believe you will learn that, and other things too, which I would not have you.

Marg. So, han't I done it curiouſly?—I think I have.——There's my letter going to Mr. Dorilant; ſince he'll needs have me ſend letters to folks! [*Aſide.*

Pinch. Very well: but now, I warrant, you would not have it go at laſt?

Marg. Indeed, and indeed, but I would, Bud!

Pinch. Well, then you are a good girl.—Come, retire to your chamber till I come back. [*Exit* Marg. So, I have ſecured all within, I'll deal with the foe without, with falſe intelligence!— *Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE, *A Chamber.*

Enter Alithea, Harcourt *and* Dorilant.

Harc. It is beyond my hopes, Madam, to draw you into a confeſſion of love for me; but, could I only prevail on you to reject that coxcomb, I were happy!

Alit. Whatever my inclinations are, Sir, I ſhall never ſuffer any body to lay a reſtraint upon my conduct!

Harc. Far be it from my thoughts!—I only dared to—

Alit. A few minutes will reſolve your doubts! Thus much, I promiſe you—that—

Harc. What?—Speak, dear angel!—for my deſtiny is on your tongue!

Alit. My brother's preſence ſhall determine all.

Dor. Do you retire a while, and leave the game to me. [*To* Harcourt.

Enter Sparkiſh, *with* Pinchwife, *who, ſeeing* Dorilant, *ſtarts.*

Pinch. What do I ſee! Dorilant!—Is it poſſible?—Or is it a phantom only?

Harc. Oh, fleſh and blood, I warrant him! [*Aſide, as he goes out.*

Spark. Hey-day! What's this?

Pinch. But 'tis no matter;—a public humiliation is his due, and he ſhall have it without abatement.

Spark. [*Introducing* Dorilant *to* Pinchwife.]—Ned Dorilant, my friend, Sir,—an honeſt, open-hearted fellow as lives.

Pinch. We are no ſtrangers to each other!

Dor. I hope not, Sir, 'tis my deſire to be better known to you.

Pinch. Sir, you *are* known ſufficiently already—

Dor. I don't underſtand you, Sir!

Spark. Nor I, by the world!

Pinch. I mean, Sir—to recommend you properly to me.

Dor. You are infinitely obliging!

Spark. Poh, pox of all theſe compliments!—Where's Margery, my ſiſter-in-law?—We want her, to complete the ſet!

Pinch. I know you do;—and it's rather unlucky, to be ſure—for that gentleman's ſake—that ſhe ſhould be abſent now.—*No Italian huſband can play the guardian better than I!*

Dor. Sir, you are pleaſant, I own—

Pinch. Nay, Sir!———

Dor. But irony is a dangerous weapon; ſo I adviſe you to take care how you handle it, for your own ſafety—

Pinch. Sir, I have a better weapon here, whenever I ſee cauſe to uſe it. [*Pointing to his ſword.*

Dor. Then, now's the time, for your inſolence requires it! [*Draws.*

Spark. Hold, hold, Dorilant, hold!—Conſider the lady—my wife, that is to be—

Pinch. [*Sneeringly.*] Dear Sir, don't be ſo raſh! You'll ſoil the ſcarlet ribbon that's upon the hilt there.

Dor. How? [*Looks confuſed.*

Spark. The ribbon! why, what is the ribbon?

Pinch. Then, what will my wife ſay about her breaſt-knot!

Spark. O, ho!

Dor. A plague confound her tongue! The pretty idiot! To go tell it him! [*Aſide.*

Pinch. What, Sir, creſt-fallen?—Oh, don't be diſcouraged—I've wherewithal to raiſe your ſpirits!

My

My wife, Sir, preſents her compliments to you with this!—there, Sir!

[*Gives him* Margery's *letter.*

Dor. And there, Sir! [*throws it upon the ground*] I treat it, as I would you, and her, and every inſult—with contempt!

Spark. Nay, by the world it ſhan't paſs ſo!—we'll know the contents, that's poz! [*Takes it up.*

Alit. 'Tis my ſiſter's hand!

Pinch. Read out, Sir!—'tis for the public ear—out with it! Wit in a wife—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Hem, hem—*To Mr. Dorilant!* Ay, you are the identical man, ſure enough; I'll make oath of that.

Pinch. Yes, yes, Sir, he's the man, there's no doubt on't—ſo make haſte.

Dor. [*Aſide.*] What an aſs ſhall I look like! but I'll prevent it if poſſible. [*Snatches at it.*] Stop, Sir, I ſay!

Pinch. Go on, Sir, I ſay.—Begin, Sir, the gentleman's impatient you ſee—ha, ha!

Spark. Hem—*Dear, ſweet Mr. Dorilant.*

[*Turns to Dorilant and winks.*

Pinch. How's that, Sir?—Oh, I ſaw your inuendo, but it won't do;—Stick to the text, I inſiſt!

Spark. I will.—*Dear, ſweet Mr. Dorilant!* That *is* the text upon my honour;—and a very good one too!—*My huſband would have me ſend you a baſe, rude, unmannerly letter,—but I won't.*——

Dor. How!

Pinch. What's this?—I ſay, Sir, that I muſt be ſatisfied of this.—— [*Offering at the letter.*

Spark. [*Keeping him off.*]—At a diſtance, with all my heart.——

Spark. Let's ſee.—*Unmannerly letter, but I won't,* well, *and would have me forbid you loving me,—but I won't.* Good! Well ſaid Margery!—ſhe won't!

Pinch. The Devil!

Spark. And would have me ſay to you, I hate you, poor Mr. Dorilant. (Poor Mr. Dorilant!) *But I won't tell a lie for him.*—That's right!

Pinch. The infernal, ſly diſſembler!

Spark. Ay, Eve was the ſame.——*For I'm ſure if you and I*—(mind!)—*were in the country, at cards together,*——

Pinch. In hell together, I'd have ye!

Spark. All in good time.—*I could not help treading on your toes under the table.*—(titters)——Gadſo, ſhe's frolickſome, Margery is!

Pinch. 'Tis forged—'tis magic—'tis impoſſible!

Spark. Don't interrupt me, I ſay!

Dor. Ha! ha! ha!

Spark. And, now he has taught me to write letters, you ſhall have longer ones from me, who am——

Dear, dear, poor dear Mr. Dorilant,
Your moſt humble friend and ſervant
to command, till death,
Margery Pinchwife.

Upon my ſoul, a very pretty epiſtle.

Pinch. I ſhall burſt—choke with rage—let me ſit down——

Spark. Gadſo!—What's become of little domine?——Where's my little chaplain?——Why George!—Dorilant, let you and I go ſeek him—I muſt find him out, faith; or it will be paſt the canonical hour. [*Exeunt* Sparkiſh *and* Dorilant.

Alit. [*Sitting down by* Pinchwife]—Come, brother, be compoſed a little——

[*Enter*

Enter Harcourt *behind.*

——Would ye be happy together——take my advice!—Releaſe her from her bondage; let her aſſociate with the innocent and ſenſible of both ſexes; and improve that mind, which has hitherto been too uninformed to defend itſelf from the attacks of its own paſſions, or from thoſe of others.

Harc. Excellent woman!—What an accompliſhed mind and form ſhe has! [*Aſide.*

Pinch. Alithea, you are in the right—I am convinced!—I am bound to you for ever!—

Spark. (*without.*) Why, George, my little Georgibus!—why, where the deuce can he be gone?

Harc. Now comes the fiery trial! [*Aſide.*

Enter Sparkiſh *and* Dorilant.

Spark. Egad, he's ſneak'd off in the very nick! Oh, no;—here he is, in *querpo!* I've found out my ſiſter Margery too, in her cage, and ſhe's coming, immediately——

Pinch. The devil ſhe is! [*Aſide.*

Alit. Hiſt! not a ſyllable to her, I inſiſt;—leave her to my documenting.——— [*Aſide.*

Enter Margery.

Marg. Deary me! If my letter has not brought Mr. Dorilant already.—I'fegs, that's pure!—Now for it. What! does he turn away from me?

Spark. Come,—to the point, to the point;—friends and bridegrooms all!—to the point.—Madam, are you willing to reſign your hand?

Alit. I am, Sir.

Spark. O ho!—She's come to reaſon, too, at laſt.—This is an auſpicious hour—[*Aſide.*]—Dorilant! where's Dorilant gone?—Egad there's always one body out of the way or another, I think.—

Dor.

Dor. No, Sir, I am here and ready.—Your hand, Madam, if you pleaſe.

Alit. I give it—*here* Sir. [*To Harcourt.*

Spark. —Madam!—

Alit. —To this gentleman, Sir—whoſe character, good ſenſe and perſeverance have deſerved that eſteem from me, which your caprice has forfeited.

Harc. Tranſcendent goodneſs!

Marg. [*Staring at her.*]—My gracious!—marry the parſon!

Spark. Forfeited?—why, pray, Madam!—I—a—a—forfeited!—why, what language is ſhe talking of, I wonder?

Alit. The language, Sir, of *love*, which, I believe, you never heard me talk before!

Pinch. 'Tis nobly done, ſiſter!—and I applaud your juſtice.

Spark. Poh, poh, poh—come, no more words, nor delay.—This is all bagatelle!—Take care, domine.—Stand out of the way a little——

Harc. No, Sir, 'tis time to throw off the maſk, when this lady authorizes it—[*throws off his diſguiſe.*]—She is the ruling planet!—and we muſt all obey her!

Spark. Planet!—by the world! there can be no planet rule here but the moon, I'm ſure, by our diſorder.

Marg. Well, this is as like the play I ſaw laſt night, as any thing can be in the world! [*Aſide.*

Pinch. Hark you!—A word with you, Sparkiſh! [*takes him aſide.*]—You are a man of the town!—of wit, I mean!

Spark. I grant it; agreed, agreed.

Pinch. Then ſupport the character,—be yourſelf!—Conſider this as the levity of her ſex; and

go

go through the form of ſurrender with as much tranquillity and coolneſs, as if it were a tranferrence of ſo much ſtock.——

Spark. I'll do it; but then my broker was a damn'd rogue, you'll remember that!—(*points to Harcourt, then joins the company.*)—Madam—I wiſh you both an inundation of happineſs!—and, for the future, will never diſparage my parts again, by making love to any woman, while I live.—— Was that right? [*To* Pinchwife.

Pinch. With the ſpirit of a Roman! a Roman! [*To him.*

Harc. Then all parties are pleaſed.——

Alit. Come ſiſter, let the little taſte you have had of town gallantry, ſhew you the inſincerity and dangers of it.—And for you, brother,

No more let anxious doubts o'er love preſide,
But generous confidence be virtue's guide!
Thoſe wives are chaſteſt, whom indulgence charms,—
Thoſe huſbands happieſt, whom no fear alarms.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

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